

Message Text

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63

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 190940Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0175

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CSAF/WASHDC

AFLC WPAFB OF //MMI//

DIRMATMGT KELLY AFB TX //MMH/MMC//

CINCPACAF HICKAM AFB HI //LB/XP/DO//

OL AFSEC JUSMAG-K TAEGU AB KOREA//

USDAO SAIGON

S E C R E T SEOUL 6381

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS KS

SUBJECT: F-5A AIRCRAFT

REF: A) STATE 184134

B) AFLC MMI 141926Z SEP 73 (SL

C) DIRMATMGT MMC/MMH 142355Z SEP 73 (S)

JOINT EMBASSY/COHUSK MESSAGE

1. WE BELIEVE PROPOSAL THAT ROKS BE ASKED ACCEPT
REPLACEMENT F-5AS IN FAR WORSE CONDITION THAN AIRCRAFT
THAT WE BORROWED WOULD NOT BE ATTRACTIVE TO KOREANS.

2. MAJOR LIMITATIONS EXIST IN KOREA IN AVAILABLE
SKILLED MANHOURS, FACILITIES, AND EQUIPMENT
NECESSARY TO PERFORM THE TASKS OUTLINED. ON AN
INDIVIDUAL AIRCRAFT BASIS, THE ROFAF IS CAPABLE OF

EETING ALL OUTLINED MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS;
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HOWEVER IT APPEARS THAT FULFILLMENT THESE
REQUIREMENTS ON THE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT INDICATED
WITHIN ACCEPTABLE TIME PERIOD WOULD REQUIRE A
MAJOR EFFORT AND WOULD NECESSITATE CONSIDERABLE

AUGMENTATION IN TECHNICAL EXPERTISE QUALITY AS WELL AS QUANTITY AND EQUIPMENT. A MORE COMPLETE EVALUATION OF CAPABILITIES IS DEPENDENT UPON MORE DEFINITIVE INFORMATION ABOUT EXACT AIRCRAFT CONDITION, BUT OUR INITIAL EVALUATION OF EXISTING ROK TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES IS NOT FAVORABLE, GIVEN THE SCOPE OF MAINTENANCE TO BE PERFORMED.

3. IN ADDITION TO THE TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES, THERE WOULD BE SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN SUGGESTING TO ROKS THAT THEY ACCEPT RETURN OF AIRCRAFT IN POOR CONDITION. ENTIRE HISTORY ENHANCE PLUS HAS BEEN IRRITATING TO KOREANS, AND THEY COULD BE EXPECTED TO INTERPRET OUTLINED PROPOSAL AS WORSENING AN ALREADY BAD SITUATION. THEIR REACTION IS LIABLE TO BE PARTICULARLY STRONG IN LIGHT OF FACT THAT WE WILL BE PUTTING END TO THEIR HOPES OF RECEIVING HIGHER PERFORMANCE REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT. WE FEAR THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO GET THEM TO ACCEPT RETURN OF PLANES IN POOR CONDITION WOULD ONLY LEAD TO FURTHER ACRIMONIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. AND THERE IS NO CERTAINTY KOREANS WOULD AGREE TO ANY ARRANGEMENT WHICH WAS NOT MORE EXPENSIVE AND CUMBERSOME TO US THAN EXISTING ONE.

4. CONSIDERING ALL THESE FACTORS OUR RECOMMENDATION IS THAT WE NOT MAKE PROPOSAL OUTLINED REF A. WE PROPOSE INSTEAD THAT NINE GOOD AIRCRAFT FROM WILLIAMS AFB BE "SPRUCED UP" AT SACRAMENTO QUICKLY AND DELIVERED TO ROKS AS INITIAL REPAYMENT. ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT IN GOOD REPAIR UNDER TERMS OF AGREEMENT SHOULD FOLLOW ON AS SOON THEREAFTER AS FEASIBLE.
HABIB

SECRET

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 10 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY AIRCRAFT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SEOUL06381
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750011-2184
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730963/abqceiav.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: A) STATE 184134 B) AFLC MMI 141926Z SEP 73 (SL
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27-Nov-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <20-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: F-5A AIRCRAFT
TAGS: MASS, MMOL, KS
To: STATE INFO SECDEF
CSAF
AFLC WPAFB OF MMI
DIRMATMGT KELLY AFB TX MMH MMC
CINCPACAF HICKAM AFB HI LB XP DO
OL AFSEC JUSMAG-K TAEGU AB KOREA
USDAO SAIGON

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005